

This I Believe Essay

My principle once likened us, 15 year old girls, to beautiful flowers. She showed us many different pictures of flowers- roses, tulips, peonies, and told everyone to believe that each and everyone of us were as likeable as them. Although each flower was different from another, they were all uniquely special because of their own characteristics. She then reminded us to cherish ourselves and accept who we are. I could relate to what she was trying to put across as I realized and understood how important yet difficult it was to truly accept oneself.

At this day and age, we witness the rise of media and the increased glamorizing of celebrities who own flawless porcelain skins, figures to die for, sharp features and the list of assets goes on and on. As time pass, after being constantly exposed to these beautiful people, I start to wonder what it would be like if I were them, if I were the owner of such goddess-like beauty. Unfortunately, at that point of time, when I was around 12 years old, I began to sink into this trap of discontent and unhappiness. I was upset that I was not as pretty as celebrities and angry that I was not the chosen one to be glamorous. I desperately wanted to attain the beauty superstars have that I began disliking my own self. I had difficulty looking into the mirror, I didn't want to see myself because all I saw was just the other extreme end of the beauty spectrum. I even contemplated surgery and strict diets. Whatever means needed I would do it all for that one goal- beauty. Disliking oneself is, in my opinion, the worst torture a person can subject one's body through. Through my experience, I was not able to do a single thing to the best of my ability because I lost trust in my body, I lost trust in myself all because I hated my looks.

To add on to the trouble I was having during that tumultuous period, that sense of inferiority I already had made me even more sensitive and aware of the achievements others possess and I do not. With school and society becoming increasingly competitive, academic achievements now appear to be the ones determining someone's caliber. Thus, turning schools and institutions into stadiums for this rat race. Sadly, I became one of those "rats". With my self-esteem already battered and bruised because of the beauty issue, marks and result just made my inferiority complex worse. I could not accept the fact that I was not as good as others in academics, especially those that had everything going smoothly for them. Hence, being unable to accept myself and what I am capable of, instead letting myself sink deeper into the doldrums.

Be it image or a lack of achievements that can cause us to dislike ourselves, is desperation on our part to achieve perfection we set. However, it is not a crime to feel that way because we are all not saints. Being able to truly accept ourselves is not a one off thing rather it is a lifelong lesson. To envy others for what they possess and we do not, is like living in their shadows. That was my lesson when I finally stopped living in shadows of others. Unable to deal with all my pent-up emotions alone, I sought help from my parents. I told them everything and my dad only said this to me, "God has His own plans for you". It helped me in thinking that there was really a reason for me to be me and to be grateful being me rather than another person. I hope I do not sound too preachy here. But, from my incident, I realized that we could never truly model ourselves after another. Why? Because we are too unique to

just be a photocopy of someone else. That would be an injustice to the special characteristics that we possess and that other person does not. Instead of striving so hard to be someone else, why not be happy that you are unique and create something unconventional that only you own?

I do not regret experiencing that period of unhappiness because I disliked myself for no matching up to others. In fact, I am thankful it happened as it opened up my eyes to the beauty I already have but could not see due to the constant comparison with another person. Only by accepting who I am, can I then feel special forever and no longer inferior- this I believe. Just like what my principal said, whether we have four petals or five, be red or blue, we are still beautiful flowers, uniquely beautiful.